



Town of Rowe
Board of Selectmen Minutes
Thursday, July 23, 2020 –5:15 p.m.
VIA TELECONFERENCE

This meeting will be held via video conference, consistent with Gov. Baker's temporary modifications to Open Meeting Law due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Board of Selectmen: Chair Charles Sokol, Selectman Ed Silva, Vice-Chair Joanne Semanie
Administrative Staff: Janice Boudreau, Executive Secretary, Paul McLatchy III, Administrative Assistant to the Boards
Audience of Citizens: Rosemary Gordon, MLP Manager David Dvore

Call to Order: Chair Sokol called the meeting to order at 5:50 P.M.

Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Selectman Silva- yes Vice-Chair Semanie- yes
(Vote: 3-0-0)

Announcement of recording devices: two

Minutes:

1. Minutes of July 13, 2020:

MOTION TO ACCEPT MINUTES: Chair Sokol made a motion to accept the Minutes of July 13, 2020 as presented. The motion was seconded by Selectman Silva.

Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Selectman Silva- yes Vice-Chair Semanie- yes
(Vote: 3-0-0)

2. Minutes of July 14, 2020:

MOTION TO ACCEPT MINUTES: Chair Sokol made a motion to accept the Minutes of July 14, 2020 as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie.

Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Selectman Silva- abstain
Vice-Chair Semanie- yes (Vote: 2-0-1)

Board of Selectmen Business:

Old Business:

1. Continue FY21 Appointments: There were several appointments that were not completed at the last meeting:

MOTION TO APPOINT: Chair Sokol made a motion to appoint the following for a one-year appointments. The motion was seconded by Selectman Silva.

- **Election Clerk: Lauren Werner- 1-year appointment**
- **Emergency Management Director, Assistant: Dennis Annear - 1-year appointment**
- **Gracy House Committee: James Lively - 1-year appointment**
- **Tax Collector: Sandy Daviau - 1-year appointment**

**Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Selectman Silva- yes Vice-Chair Semanie- yes
(Vote: 3-0-0)**

MOTION TO APPOINT: Chair Sokol made a motion to appoint the following for 3-year appointments. The motion was seconded by Selectman Silva.

- **Cultural Council: BJ Roche – 3-year appointment**
- **Cultural Council: Paulette Roccio – 3-year appointment**
- **Conservation Commission: Robert Clancy – 3-year appointment**
- **Police Chief: Julie Shippee – 3-year appointment**
- **Zoning Board of Appeals: Ellynn Packard – 3-year appointment**
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- **Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Selectman Silva- yes Vice-Chair Semanie- yes
(Vote: 3-0-0)**

There was discussion about the Executive Secretary position and the term.

Vice-Chair Semanie: said she thought that there should be work to review and rework the job descriptions for the administrative staff and give more authority to the Executive Secretary position to take off more of the burden to the Board. She thought it should be made a three year position since it had historically always been that.

Ed Silva: Selectman Silva said he wanted to make the appointment a one-year term and sort out Town Administrator duties. At the time of the creation of the Executive Secretary position, members were more engaged on the day to day functions and that there is not that time available to the current board to do so.

Chair Sokol: According to KP Law to permanently delegate the types of responsibilities we wanted to delegate to a Town Administrator, that special legislation at the state level would be needed. There is nothing to say that the Selectmen do not have the authority to delegate responsibilities as needed. Chair Sokol thought the board should work to begin delegating authority and move in that direction.

Vice-Chair Semanie: Since there might not be approval for the granting of authority to a town administrator position, she felt it should be taken off of the discussion and move forward, as Chair Sokol said, and give more authority to the Executive Secretary and work through the allocation of roles between the administrative staff. She recommended a 3-year term.

Chair Sokol: Said that over time he would like to see the town preparing and developing the structure to assist in the transition when it comes time for someone to fill the position, when Executive Secretary retires, to step into to fill rather than step into the

position to create. Start giving more authority to the administrative staff in town hall and structure things over time so they can administer the day-to-day functions

Executive Secretary: Ms. Boudreau spoke about the history of the position and how it evolved over the last 7 years and that up until last year, it had been a 3-year appointment. She said that the weakness in the financial positions had caused a great deal of work be placed on administrative staff and that it had to be fixed in order to have the administrative positions be freer to pursue their own projects and function with taking on greater responsibilities.

Selectman Silva: Would like to see the administrative staff take on more authority and leg work in the very near future.

Selectman Semanie: She thought there was not the trust given to administrative staff to take on more authority, so it must be given to them.

Chair Sokol: Felt that collectively that the administrative staff could get things done and take authority and the process happen relatively quickly.

Paul McLatchy III: The authority and the title are two different things. He felt the voters could decide the authority. You cannot give the administrative staff more powers than given to the Board of Selectmen and felt that there was still flexibility given to the Selectmen to decide title and duties.

Chair Sokol: To summarize, with the staff we currently have we can work towards having more authority to take care of the day to day functions to take more off the Board.

Paul McLatchy III: Spoke about research he had done in which the past the Town Coordinator position had been a 3-year term and that at one point there was an effort to reduce the term and it was shot down. He said that the person could still be removed from a position at the board's discretion or, in the next year or so, create a new position.

MOTION TO APPOINT: Chair Sokol made a motion to appoint Janice Boudreau as Executive Secretary for a for 3-year appointment. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie.

**Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Selectman Silva- abstain
Vice-Chair Semanie- yes (Vote: 2-0-1)**

New Business:

1. Treasurer and Payroll Issues Discussion: Selectman Silva stated that he thought it was time to terminate the employment of the current Treasurer due to not meeting job requirements that were addressed in Executive Session and have not been resolved.

Vice-Chair Semanie said that the position needs to be closer to what was discussed prior to the hiring of the current Treasurer that would create a benefitted salaried position to attract a better candidate and transition the position to adding the Tax Collector position as most towns are doing. Vice-Chair said it would be good to hire someone that is certified as a municipal Treasurer. The average pay for the position is \$27.00 per hour. There was discussion about the complexities of the position and how to transition hiring a new person.

Following discussion, it was decided to proceed with the termination effective immediately. Since the books have not been balanced since November, there was discussion about rectifying the books prior to hiring a new candidate and who could perform the work. Vice-Chair Semanie felt that between her and Paul McLatchy, they could step in to perform the transition.

MOTION TO RELEASE: Chair Sokol made a motion to release Beverly Cooper from her responsibilities as Town Treasurer and direct the Administrative Staff as required to perform all necessary actions to assure the continuance of responsibilities be taken care of in her absence effective immediately. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie.

Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Selectman Silva- yes Vice-Chair Semanie- yes (Vote: 3-0-0)

It was agreed to have Executive Secretary contact Ms. Cooper by telephone and follow up with a certified letter asking for the return of all relevant financial documents. It was also decided to advertise the position with a deadline of August 17th.

MOTION TO POST JOB: Chair Sokol made a motion to post the Job Posting for the Treasurer as written. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie.

Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Selectman Silva- yes Vice-Chair Semanie- yes (Vote: 3-0-0)

2. **Liaison Appointments:** Following discussion it was decided that Selectman Silva would continue as DPW Liaison, Vice-Chair Semanie would take on Town Hall Administrative Staff Liaison and Chair Sokol as Fire/Police Liaison.
3. **Appointment to Cemetery Commission due to elected person declining position:** A letter from Jay Williams was reviewed stating that Marilyn Wilson, who was elected to the Cemetery Commission, declined the position, and recommended Joanne Semanie as replacement.

MOTION TO APPOINT: Chair Sokol made a motion to appoint Joanne Semanie to the Cemetery Commission to fill out the term until the next election. The motion was seconded by Selectman Silva.

Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Selectman Silva- yes Vice-Chair Semanie- abstain (Vote: 2-0-1)

4. **EMD Position:** It was noted that Vice-Chair Semanie had spoken with Herb Butzke about the Emergency Management Position (EMD) since the Board of Health said he had performed really well in the MAPHCO meetings. Vice-Chair said she would reach out to him again.
5. **Fire Dept. – Budget issues:** There was discussion about the Fire Dept. handing in timesheets for the prior year in late as well as over budget. There were bills were handed in late from prior year that were months old. It was also noted that there was not a formal agreement for

the Fire Dept. to perform training on Susan Williams property as was promised for some time. It was decided to have Fire Chief attend a meeting to discuss issues further.

6. Zoom Account Policy: Selectmen reviewed a Zoom policy for private groups who inquired about using the town's zoom account for their meetings.

MOTION TO ACCEPT POLICY: Chair Sokol made a motion to accept the Zoom Policy for clarification of use by town and private entities. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie.

Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Selectman Silva- yes Vice-Chair Semanie- yes
(Vote: 3-0-0)

7. Generator at Rowe Elementary School: There was discussion about the role of the town with regards to the generator at Rowe Elementary School since the generator was primarily to provide power to the school as an emergency shelter. It was decided that Executive Secretary would speak with Matt Crowningshield from the School Committee to address.
8. Vote to Apply for Mass Works Grant: Administrative Assistant requested to apply for a Mass Works grant to fund the rebuilding of Yankee Road.

MOTION TO APPLY FOR GRANT: Following discussion, Chair Sokol made a motion to apply for a MassWorks grant to fund the rebuilding of Yankee Road. The motion was seconded by Selectman Silva.

Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Selectman Silva- yes Vice-Chair Semanie- yes
(Vote: 3-0-0)

Contracts:

1. GIS Internet Services Annual Maintenance Agreement – Board of Assessors: Selectmen reviewed the GIS Internet Services Annual Maintenance Agreement approved by the Board of Assessors.

MOTION TO SIGN CONTRACT: Chair Sokol made a motion to sign the GIS Internet Services Annual Maintenance Agreement approved by the Board of Assessors. The motion was seconded by Selectman Silva.

Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Selectman Silva- yes Vice-Chair Semanie- yes
(Vote: 3-0-0)

2. Intermunicipal Agreement Between the Towns of Rowe and Monroe for Shared Town Accountant Services: Selectmen reviewed the agreement for Shared Town Accountant Services since it has changed due to Charlemont withdrawing from the agreement. Accountant Fierro Jr. adjusted the figures for the adjustment by lowering the salary and an adjustment to offset the increase in benefit cost.

MOTION TO APPROVE AGREEMENT: Chair Sokol made a motion to approve the Shared Town Accountant Services Agreement between The Town of Rowe and the Town of

Monroe contingent upon the Town of Monroe approval. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie.

Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Selectman Silva- yes Vice-Chair Semanie- yes
(Vote: 3-0-0)

Administrative Office Updates:

1. Executive Secretary Updates: Janice Boudreau said she attended the Franklin Regional Council of Government (FRCOG) Council meeting and that a concern for the town was the transition with the emergency communication system joining the state system and that a quantity of new radios would be provided to the town by a grant but was not certain if fire and police would need an upgrade from the base model provided in the grant. It would be a subject to discuss with Fire Chief at next meeting.

Future Meetings: Chair Sokol said the next meeting would be on August 6, 2020
Discussion to include: Fire Dept., EMD replacement, Primary Election Warrant.

Adjournment:

MOTION: Chair Sokol made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m. The motion was seconded by Selectman Silva.

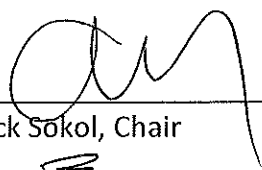
Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Selectman Silva- yes Vice-Chair Semanie- yes
(Vote: 3-0-0)

Respectfully Submitted,

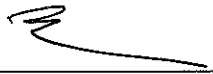
Janice Boudreau, Executive Secretary

Approval Date: _____

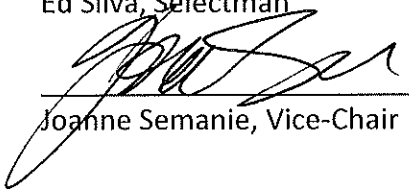
Approved:



Chuck Sokol, Chair



Ed Silva, Selectman



Joanne Semanie, Vice-Chair

Documents:

1. Agenda 7-23-2020
2. Draft Minutes of July 13, 2020
3. Draft Minutes of July 14, 2020
4. FY21 Appointment List
5. GIS Internet Services Annual Maintenance Agreement – Board of Assessors
6. Intermunicipal Agreement Between the Towns of Rowe and Monroe for Shared Town Accountant Services
7. Email – Administrative Assistant re: Contract change
8. Executive Secretary Updates
9. Zoom Policy

Mail:

- Letter from Jay Williams
- Letter from Building Commissioner re: Ford Hill Rd. Parcel 403-0-017
- KP Law Reappointment Confirmation